The invention in which an exclusive right is claimed is defined by the following:

1. A method for determining official results for a game session of an online game played with clients connected to an online gaming service, wherein each client includes a computing device executing the online game and has at least one player participating in the game session, comprising the steps of:

 (a) receiving reports at the gaming service from the clients, wherein the report received from a client includes results for all players participating in the game session, as perceived by the online game executed on said client;

 (b) automatically comparing the results reported to the gaming service by the clients, to determine if any inconsistency exists in the results that were reported;

 (c) if no inconsistency exists and if results are reported by all of the clients initially participating in the game session, using the results that were consistently reported as the official results for the game session; and

 (d) otherwise, if either an inconsistency exists in the results that were reported or if not all of the clients initially participating in the game session reported results, applying a predefined set of arbitration rules to determine the official results for the game session.

2. The method of Claim 1, wherein the report indicates whether connectivity to another client was lost during the game session.

3. The method of Claim 2, further comprising the step of registering each player with the online gaming service as a participant in the game session before the game session begins, so that any player who has not registered is prohibited from participating in the game session and so that any player who has registered will subsequently be determined by the online gaming service to have been a participant in the game session, even if the player does not finish play of the game session or denies participating in the game session.

4.   The method of Claim 3, wherein if the results that were reported indicate that connectivity was lost with another client used by a player who registered, and the other client did not report results, the arbitration rules will determine that the client not reporting results simply disconnected and stopped participating in the game session before its completion.

5.   The method of Claim 3, further comprising the step of enabling a client that is unable to communicate with the gaming service using a preferred communication protocol because said client is being subjected to packet bombing, to instead employ at least a limited transmission to the gaming service using an alternative communication protocol that is unaffected by the packet bombing, said arbitration rules treating the limited transmission as an indication that said client may have been unable to communicate with the gaming service and other clients with the preferred communication protocol as a result of the packet bombing.

6.   The method of Claim 1, wherein a report from a client may indicate whether any event or condition was noted for a specific other client that is outside predefined parameters for play of the online game, where said event or condition appears to indicate that the specific other client is executing a modified online game.

7.   The method of Claim 1, wherein the predefined arbitration rules provide for using the results reported by a majority of the clients submitting reports, as the official results.

8.   The method of Claim 1, wherein the predefined arbitration rules determine the official results based upon data previously collected in regard to the players who began to participate in the game session, said data providing an indication of whether the players are to be trusted in regard to results reported by the clients used by the players.

9.   The method of Claim 8, further comprising the step of updating the data for the players who began to participate in the game session, as a function of the arbitration rules, after the game session is concluded.

10.   The method of Claim 1, further comprising the step of updating a state of the game session that is stored by the gaming service when determining the official results by applying the arbitration rules.

11.   The method of Claim 1, wherein the arbitration rules determine that a network filter may have been applied by at least one player if the reports received by the gaming service include conflicting results for the game session.

12.   The method of Claim 1, further comprising the step of initially applying a predefined time interval for the game session, after which the gaming service will not consider any reports received from a client when determining the official results of the game session.

13.   The method of Claim 12, further comprising the step of enabling the clients to request an extension of time for the predefined time interval, if additional time is required to complete the game session.

14.   The method of Claim 1, further comprising the step of requiring that the online game report the results of the game session after the game session is over, for all players perceived by the online game to be participants in the game session.

15.   A memory medium that stores machine instructions for carrying out the steps of Claim 1.

16.   A server computing device used in an online gaming service for determining official results for a game session of an online game that is played by client computing devices connected to the online gaming service, wherein each client computing device executes the online game and has at least one player participating in the game session, comprising:

(a)   a memory used for storing machine instructions;

(b)   a network interface that couples the server computing device in communication with client computing devices participating in the game session;

(c)   a processor that is coupled to the memory and to the network interface, said processor executing the machine instructions to carry out a plurality of functions, including:

(i)   receiving reports from all client computing device that report said results, wherein the report received from a client computing device includes results for all players participating in the game session, as perceived by the online game executed on said client computing device;

(ii)   automatically comparing the results reported by the client computing devices, to determine if any inconsistency exists in the results that were reported;

(iii)   if no inconsistency exists and if results are reported by all client computing devices initially participating in the game session, using the results that were consistently reported as the official results for the game session; and

(iv)   otherwise, if an inconsistency exists in the results that were reported or if all of the client computing devices that were initially participating in the game session did not report results, applying a predefined set of arbitration rules to determine the official results for the game session.

17.   The server computing device of Claim 16, wherein the report indicates whether connectivity to another client computing device was lost during the game session.

18. The server computing device of Claim 17, wherein the machine instructions further cause the processor to record a registration of each player as a participant in the game session before the game session begins, and to treat any player who has not registered as not participating in the game session, so that any player who has registered and did not finish the game session or did not report results is still considered to be a participant in the game session.

19. The server computing device of Claim 18, wherein if the results that were reported indicate that connectivity was lost with another client computing device used by a player who registered, and the other client computing device did not report results, the arbitration rules will determine that the client computing device not reporting results simply disconnected, and that the player using the client computing device not reporting results stopped playing the game session before its completion.

20. The server computing device of Claim 18, wherein the machine instructions executed by the processor further cause the processor to detect a transmission from a client computing device using a less preferred communication protocol, and to determine that said client computing device is using the less preferred communication protocol because said client computing device is being subjected to packet bombing, wherein the less preferred communication protocol is unaffected by packet bombing, said arbitration rules treating the transmission as an indication that said client computing device may have been unable to communicate with the gaming service and other client computing devices with a preferred communication protocol because of the packet bombing.

21. The server computing device of Claim 16, wherein a report indicating that an event or condition was noted for a specific other client computing device that is outside predefined parameters for play of the online game enables the server computing device to determine that the specific other client computing device is executing a modified online game.

22. The server computing device of Claim 16, wherein the predefined arbitration rules use the results reported by a majority of the client computing devices submitting reports as the official results.

23.   The server computing device of Claim 16, wherein the predefined arbitration rules determine the official results based upon data previously collected in regard to the players participating in the game session, said data being stored in the memory and providing an indication of whether the players are to be trusted in regard to results reported by the client computing devices used by the players.

24.   The server computing device of Claim 23, wherein the machine instructions further cause the processor to update the data for the players who are participating in the game session, as a function of the arbitration rules, after the game session is concluded,.

25.   The server computing device of Claim 16, wherein the machine instructions further cause the processor to update a state of the game session that is stored in the memory, when determining the official results by applying the arbitration rules.

26.   The server computing device of Claim 16, wherein the arbitration rules determine that a network filter may have been applied by at least one player if the reports include conflicting results for the game session.

27.   The server computing device of Claim 16, wherein the machine instructions further cause the processor to apply a predefined time interval for the game session, after which the server computing device will not consider any reports received from a client computing device when determining the official results of the game session.

28.   The server computing device of Claim 27, wherein the machine instructions further cause the processor to enable any of the client computing devices to request an extension of time for the predefined time interval, if additional time is required to complete the game session.

29.   A method for determining official results for a game session of an online game that is played by client computing devices connected to an online gaming service, wherein each client computing device executes the online game and has at least one player participating in the game session, comprising the steps of:

(a)   requiring that the online game executing on each participating client computing device automatically cause a report to be submitted to the gaming service at a conclusion of the game session, said report indicating results for all players perceived by the online game executed by the client computing device to be participants in the game session; and

(b)   evaluating all reports received by the online gaming service from the client computing devices and applying a predefined set of arbitration rules to determine the official results.

30.   The method of Claim 29, further comprising the step of requiring that the online game register each player with the online gaming service before the player is enabled to participate in the game session, so that any player not completing the game session is readily identified, said arbitration rules determining that any player who has not reported results to the online gaming service may have disconnected the client computing device being used by said player during the game session.

31.   The method of Claim 30, further comprising the step of requiring the online game to be enabled to detect a problem communicating with at least one of the online gaming service and other client computing devices participating in the game session that may be caused by packet flooding of the client computing device executing the online game, and in response, sending an indication of said problem to the online gaming service using an alternative communication protocol that is unaffected by the packet flooding.